

Figure 4.4: Critical Questions for Principal Consideration

**Building the Foundation for a Professional Learning Community**

- Has a mission of ensuring high levels of learning for all students been clearly articulated to the entire faculty, staff, students, and parents?
- Has a vision of the school you seek to become been collaboratively developed and communicated, and most important, is it being used for planning and decision making?
- Have you collaboratively developed shared commitments that all adults will adhere to in order to become the kind of school described in your vision statement? Are the commitments frequently referred to? Are they monitored? Is behavior that is incongruent with the shared commitments confronted? Are behaviors that are the best examples of the commitments publically recognized and celebrated?
- Have you collaboratively developed SMART goals for school improvement? Are they monitored?
- Have collaborative teams translated the school's SMART goals into team goals?
- Do you provide the resources and training necessary for teams to meet their SMART goals?
- Has the schedule been altered in order to provide collaborative team time within the school day?
- Does the schedule allow for students to receive additional time and support for interventions and enrichment within the school day, regardless of the teacher to whom they are assigned?
- Have policies, practices, and procedures been analyzed and aligned with your learning mission?
- Are major decisions filtered through the question, What will be the probable impact on learning?

**Collaborative Teams**

- Have you organized your school into collaborative teams? What plans have been made for singletons?
- Did you give great care and thought into choosing team leaders?
- Have you clearly defined the role of team leaders—in writing?
- Have you provided training for team leaders?
- Do you have regularly scheduled meetings with your team leaders in which you model how teams should work in your school?

- Have you reviewed the importance of team norms with your faculty and staff? What resources did you use?
- Have all teams written norms, including the team leaders' team?
- Are norms reviewed, adapted, and most important, used?
- Did teams share their norms with each other?
- What happens when norms are not being adhered to?
- Has the work of teams been clearly articulated? How is the work of teams monitored?
- How do you analyze the work of each team? How do you monitor the contributions of each team member? How do teams and team members receive the help they need when they experience difficulty or their work does not meet a high standard of quality?

## **A Clear and Passionate Focus on Learning**

- Have collaborative teams clarified state standards in each grade or course and subject?
- Have the power standards or essential outcomes been collaboratively identified?
- Have the standards been aligned vertically?
- Have teams developed common pacing guides?
- Have teams engaged in the process of determining what each power standard, if met, would look like in student work?
- Have teams developed common scoring rubrics?
- Can team members apply the scoring rubrics consistently, with inter-rater reliability?
- Have teams agreed on the conditions under which students will take assessments?

## **Monitoring Student Learning**

- Have teams been provided resources, training, and examples regarding the power and use of common formative assessments?
- Have all teams begun the process of writing common formative assessments?
- Are teams learning how to use the results of common formative assessments to make decisions about additional time, support, or enrichment for students, and how to learn from each other about ways to improve instructional effectiveness?

- Are teams sharing common formative assessments within the school and across the district (or other districts)?
- Are the assessment formats congruent with key summative assessments?
- Are assessments constantly being tweaked and improved?

### **Time, Support, and Enrichment**

- Is there a schoolwide, systematic, written plan for providing students with additional time, support, or enrichment within the school day, regardless of the teacher to whom they are assigned?
- Is the plan timely and flexible, allowing students to move in and out of interventions?
- Is the plan directive rather than invitational?
- Does the school schedule accommodate the plan? If not, can it be adjusted so that it does?
- Does the plan commit to providing students who are most in need with the most help by your most experienced and competent staff?
- How is effectiveness of the plan monitored?

### **A Focus on Results**

- Has the school developed a data analysis protocol to help teams structure their dialogue around evidence of student learning?
- Do individual teachers, teacher teams, and the principal monitor the learning of each student—student by student, skill by skill? How is this done? What happens with the information?
- Is the information used to make sure each student who is struggling receives appropriate and focused interventions?
- Are the learning data used to set SMART goals for improvement? Are the goals shared and monitored?
- Are teams provided with timely, accurate feedback regarding the quality of the work they are doing? Do you provide teams with assistance when necessary, and do you frequently and publically recognize and celebrate the work of individuals and teams when appropriate?